

SOLON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Tuesday, September 7, 2021, 7:00pm

Solon Township Hall

9191 S. Kasson St., Cedar, MI 49621

I. Call Meeting to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Morgan called the meeting to order at 7:03pm with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

II. Roll Call/Guest Sign-in

Present: Al Laskey, Member; Steve Morgan, Chair; Meg Paxton, Member; Lisa Rossi, Member; Samantha Vandervlucht, Member; Todd Yeomans, Vice Chair/ZBA Rep and Steve Yoder, Township Board Rep

Guests: Judy Janosik, Charlie Smith and Karen Smith

III. Motion to Approve Minutes – August 3, 2021

Chair Morgan asked for a motion to approve the August minutes as presented. Changes to the minutes reported: *Replace Cover with Cove and roof with roofs on Page 2, under Township Board Rep Report and under Zoning Administrator report take “s” off Delmoupied.* Laskey moved to approve the August 3, 2021, minutes as amended; Yoder seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

IV. Agenda – September 7, 2021

Chair Morgan asked for a motion to approve the September agenda as presented. Laskey moved to approve the September 7, 2021, agenda as presented; Rossi seconded. All present in favor, motion carried.

V. Correspondence –None.

VI. Public Comment(three minutes per person unless extended by Chair) – None.

VII. Conflicts of Interest – None reported at this time.

VIII. Reports

Township Board Rep: Yoder reported on the following issues from the Township Board August 19, 2021, meeting:

- Approved to spend up to \$1,350 to put new signs up at Solon Beach Park, one at the entrance and one as you get into the park with hours.
- Cedar River project – Township is considering putting in buoys to bring the boats in as they are getting caught in grass.

- Township Supervisor advised to table Flaska property density request as no proper recommendation from the township council has been received.

ZBA Rep: Yeomans advised nothing to report at this time.

Zoning Administrator: Cypher advised that the township legal counsel was approached by Delmoupied's new attorney to get an extension and work out a deal with township council advising no extension or a deal to be worked out at this time.

Cypher reported on Flaska's request for an extremely high density as a use by right on the 88 or 120-acre parcel on Lautner Road, north of Robinsons. Cypher reviewed that under ordinance 27, the PRD section has language to allow township board to approve the Flaska project for 48 dwellings on property across the street, which ultimately was lowered to 32 dwellings due to sewer.

Cypher reported on Flaska's request for 300 dwellings with legal counsel emailing directly to the township board. Cypher reported that legal counsel sent a letter to the Township Board without zoning administrator input, and the letter left out that PRD section language is included in the zoning ordinance. Cypher advised that there is a compromise to provide Flaska's concept with non-binding comments to help planning commission regarding the Master Plan. Cypher stated the Flaska request was tabled as there was not enough documentation to address questions at the Township meeting regarding the 300-dwelling request.

Cypher reviewed the Zoning Administrator report for August 2021 provided to the Planning Commission members prior to this meeting.

Discussion followed about Flaska's access on M72, Solon and Lautner Road with respect to the high-density request. Cypher advised that once the high-density application from Flaska is deemed complete, then it will be brought to the Planning Commission, who is the recommending body to the Township Board.

IX. Public Hearing –None

- Open Public Hearing by chair and Presentation by Applicant
- PC Questions / Discussion with Applicant
- Staff Comments (ZA/Planner)
- Public Comment (limited to three minutes per person unless extended by chair)
- Applicant's Response to Public Comment, directing statements to PC
- PC further discussion with staff (if required)
- Close Public Hearing by Chair
- Findings of Fact – Deliberations with PC members/questions of applicant if needed
- PC Motions/Action

X. New Business

- Discussion on allowing Accessory Dwellings (Guest Houses) –

Cypher advised of the request from the August Planning Commission meeting to have a discussion on the pros and cons of accessory dwellings. Laskey stated that he feels it is important to have a discussion and clarified with Cypher that “granny flats” must be attached to single family dwellings per the current ordinance.

Cypher reviewed the definitions of a dwelling unit and single-family dwellings that are for habitable usage and the permitted accessory building usage (Section 4.14 of the ordinance) with accessory building uses not for habitable space. Extensive discussion followed on affordable housing needs by the community from the survey, types of dwellings and accessory buildings, along with short-term rentals and tourism needs. Laskey stated that perhaps families should be allowed to build an accessory building for a family if the owner’s property is big enough. Cypher advised in each district it states single family dwelling related to minimum lot size with workarounds including a land division approved from the Health Department, which keeps single-family dwelling and character intact.

Discussion followed on affordable housing, land costs and parcel sizes. Cypher advised that land division may be a consideration for an additional dwelling. Planning commission members stated and agree that safe guards need to be incorporated to prevent adverse housing situations and that while there is an understanding of the need for affordability, existing property owners’ needs must be considered. Discussion followed with planning commission members in agreement to continue this discussion at the next meeting while going forward with the current zoning ordinance draft rewrite.

Chair Morgan advised to keep this on the agenda with ability to table as necessary due to other business. Cypher advised planning commission members to start reading the definition of family for initial homework followed by the intent section. Discussion followed. Cypher stated that samples from other townships will be provided, possibly by the October meeting.

XI. Unfinished business

- A. Zoning Ordinance Draft rewrite – June 23, 2021 draft V.1. with changes – 8/3/21
Yoder advised that the percentages of trees and shrubs in the landscaping ordinance have not been taken out yet. Cypher advised the corrections will be made and clean copies will be provided to planning commission members. Cypher stated that there is the ability to schedule a public meeting for October 5, 2021, for the zoning ordinance rewrite.

Chair Morgan asked for motion to set a public hearing. Yoder moved to set a public hearing on October 5, 2021, at 7pm, for a zoning ordinance draft rewrite; Vandervlucht seconded. Cypher advised that 2017 survey is the most recent survey. Discussion followed on sending out a new survey. Cypher advised planning commission members to use the 2017 survey questions as a base and bring suggestions next month for new survey questions changes or edits, so that the survey

can be sent out with winter tax bills with planning commission members in agreement.

- B. Master Plan Review – Future Land Use Map – Housing Density in districts –
Cypher reviewed the current land-use map provided to planning commission meeting members at tonight’s meeting. Discussion followed on spot zoning and recommendations for areas with high-density zoning. Cypher advised planning commission members to think concept wise and as an example, RA2 and RA5 moved permitted uses to special uses and these zones can always be changed to RA1 with a minimum of an acre in a zoning district. Discussion followed on the high density and the importance of a future land use map. Cypher advised the ordinance draft is in process of being updated so that density requests match the Master Plan to support the type of growth currently in the township.

Cypher advised that the Master Plan will be a five-year plan review not an adoption of an amendment as specified by the State of Michigan. Chair Morgan advised that the survey is the main consideration at this time so the survey can be mailed out with December tax bills.

XII. Other Items

A. None

XIII. ZA/Planning Commission Comment–None.

XIV. Public Comment(three minutes per person unless extended by Chair)–

Judy Janosik stated that any density changes will affect how the township is seen now, and the rural area is what makes Solon Township different in her opinion.

Charlie Smith stated he liked the spirited discussion and agrees with Yeomans comment that everyone benefits from tourism. Smith stated that with respect to Rossi’s comment on having no problems with short-term rentals, he guarantees that someday there will be problems. Smith reported he called three times on a short-term rental noise violation and was advised by police of the person’s right to shoot a firearm. Smith advises that the planning commission and other concerned bodies need to be careful in how the ordinance is worded. Smith stated that the planning commission needs to find something in the middle with the accessory dwellings being a great point.

Rossi clarified an earlier comment that she has never had a problem with the need to evict someone from a short-term rental.

Laskey stated that currently as people age, they may wind up in nursing home or if there is latitude for a “bit of give” for accessory housing on family land, the retiree will have a better quality of life.

XV. Adjournment: There being no objection, Chair Morgan adjourned the meeting at 8:54pm

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 6, 2021, at 7:00pm, at the Solon Township Hall.

Respectfully Submitted

Sandra Dunkin, Recording Secretary

Date Approved: October 5, 2021